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ALAMEDA COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION

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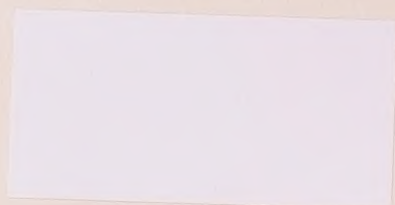
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CITY OF BERKELEY



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PLANNING

in

ALAMEDA COUNTY

Including the
ANNUAL REPORT
1939 - 1940



ALAMEDA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

PHILIP R. THAYER, Chairman

BURNETT HAMILTON . Secretary

PERCY NUTT . Vice-Chairman

GEORGE A. JANSSEN . . .
. . . Board of Supervisors

I. B. PARSONS
M. G. CALLAGHAN

RALPH HOYT . District Attorney

H. G. SPAULDING

I. S. SHATTUCK
. Planning Consultant

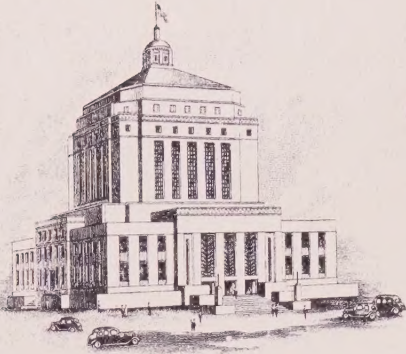
FRANCIS J. VIOLICH
. Planning Engineer





★ An area presenting typical
county planning problems.

PHOTO BY CLYDE SUNDERLAND - OAKLAND, CALIF.



COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

PLANNING COMMISSION
COURT HOUSE
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA
TELEPHONE HIGATE 0844

September 9, 1940

To the Planning Commission
of the County of Alameda

Gentlemen:

Each year the California State Planning Board requests each planning commission in the state to submit a report of activities according to an outline specified by the State Planning Board.

This year, with the valuable assistance of Mr. Violich, I have prepared a fuller explanation of planning in Alameda County, and of planning authority granted by the State, with the recommendation that this material be approved by the Commission for attachment to the annual report to the State Planning Board. It is also recommended that the Commission act in favor of publishing a sufficient number of copies of this amplified report to distribute to County officials and to the general public.

Good planning is good advertising and it would seem to be proper for the Commission to take advantage of this fact and use this opportunity to sell its work and future planning possibilities to the people in Alameda County.

Respectfully submitted,

I. S. Shattuck, Planning Consultant
Alameda County Planning Commission

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FOREWORD

The growth of Alameda County in the past decades has been rapid, vigorous, and normal. There is every indication that it will continue to be so. Here, as elsewhere, future growth must be planned for in order to protect substantial gains and avoid repetition of losses occasioned by mistakes in the past.

Planning is only at its beginning in Alameda County and of necessity must move slowly and surely in the direction of sound progress for the general welfare of its people. While at the beginning of planning, there should be pointed out some of the basic reasons for and the general scope of comprehensive planning under the State law, and how it can be used to benefit the County.

That is the purpose of this report. The Alameda County Planning Commission is causing it to be published for transmittal to the Board of Supervisors and for distribution throughout the County.

Part I is a simple statement of what **can** be done in planning in Alameda County, and what **is** being done. Part II is the official annual report of the Alameda County Planning Commission for the year 1939-40, in a form prescribed by the California State Planning Board.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Philip A. Thayer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Philip" and last name "Thayer" clearly legible.

Chairman
Alameda County Planning Commission.

PART I

PLANNING IN ALAMEDA COUNTY — AS AUTHORIZED BY THE PLANNING ACT.

THE BACKGROUND FOR PLANNING

Less than 150 years ago the Padres recognized the fertility of the soil and the potentialities of the region and settled in what is now southern Alameda County. Here they built the first white settlement — Mission San Jose de Guadalupe. They imported trees and vines from Spain, and the orchards and vineyards which soon covered the hills established the beginnings of agriculture, now an important part of the County's basic economy.

The settlers who followed were families from Spain and Mexico and it was they who established the great Ranchos which carried on the first large scale farming in the County.

With the coming of settlers from the Eastern States of America, the Ranchos were gradually broken up and farming began to take place on a more intensive scale.

In 1853 the County was formed as a part of the State of California and during the ensuing half-century the natural resources of the County provided for grazing, truck farming, grain and crop farming, horticulture, and salt production. At the same time there developed a great increase in population, which at the present time is continuing to increase, while the natural resources are continuing to be developed.

Where once a few settlers lived in isolated areas, there existed no pressing need for planned growth. But now with this definite increase in population, attended by more intensive and varied use of land, the County's needs in the form of roads and highways, residential, commercial and industrial areas, recreational facilities, etc. must be planned for ahead of time. Planning, which is the next step in the natural development of Alameda County, must be carried on in order to protect the future of its resources and its people.

WHAT COUNTY PLANNING IS

It has been said that:

"A man's judgment can never be better than his information; therefore, get the information."

County planning is the collection, portrayal and study of information and the exercise of judgment in the preparation of plans for the future physical development of the County. Good county planning results in the expenditure of money and effort on the most essential things and is, therefore, able to prevent waste. It also regulates undesirable development that would otherwise be detrimental to decent living conditions and the general well being of the people.

County planning commissions receive their authority by virtue of a state legislative enactment called "The Planning Act", first passed by the State legislature in 1929 and amended in 1937. "The Planning Act" requires that each California county appoint a planning commission and gives broad powers and duties to commissions.

Thus, the Alameda County Planning Commission was established in 1929 and with a very modest application of funds has carried on the activities deemed necessary to make a proper approach to thorough planning. The Commission is composed of six citizen members appointed by the Board of Supervisors, and three ex-officio members including the chairman of the Board of Supervisors, the County Surveyor, and the District Attorney.

It is stated in "The Planning Act" that it shall be the function and duty of the planning commission to prepare and adopt a comprehensive long-term general plan — a "Master Plan" — for the physical development of the county. This Master Plan is supposed to be a general guide. It provides for the general growth and development of the county along the lines that the commission, in its sound judgment after thorough study of all the factors involved, deems necessary for the good of the county.

MASTER PLAN — THE GENERAL GUIDE
OFFICIAL PLAN — TO CARRY OUT PORTIONS
OF THE MASTER PLAN

Actually the Master Plan is composed of several different plans, which are the following:

1. Conservation Plan
2. Land Use Plan
3. Recreation Plan
4. Streets and Highways Plan
5. Transportation Plan
6. Transit Plan
7. Public Services and Facilities Plan
8. Public Buildings Plan
9. Community Design Plan
10. Housing Plan

The commission can adopt the Master Plan, or any part of it when completed, or it can adopt a partial plan or outline pending completion. When this has been done "The Planning Act" provides that the commission may prepare and adopt official plans (detailed plans)

Plate 1—Resources and Investments Destroyed by Flood Erosion in San Lorenzo Creek.



for carrying out portions of the Master Plan. These detailed plans may be, for instance, ordinances for enactment by the Board of Supervisors, the most common of these being: zoning ordinances which regulate the use of property, control nuisances and establish desirable standards of building density; and subdivision ordinances which require conformity of subdivision plans to desirable standards of street widths and grades, lot arrangement, etc.

County planning commissions in California, then, are empowered by law to prepare master plans of county development and detailed plans for effectuating the master plan.

THE PORTIONS OF THE MASTER PLAN — SOME APPLICATIONS TO ALAMEDA COUNTY

Following is a brief statement of the various portions of the master plan with a number of illustrations showing relation to conditions in Alameda County:

- 1. Conservation Plan** — for the protection of natural resources including water, soils, wooded areas, wild life, etc.

Plate 2—Only Known Stand of Dutton's Cypress Covers Cedar Mt. and makes this Scenic Area Worthy of Protection. (Photo by A. E. Weislander, U. S. Forest Service.)





Plate 3—Good Residential Set-Back Preserves View, Sun and Air, Protects Property Values.

Plate 4—Residential Set- Back Closed off by Corner Store. Compare with Plate 3 above.



By the use of a conservation plan controls of pollution of water supply, floods, erosion, and protection of areas of valuable scenic interest may be established. (See Plates 1 and 2.)

2. Land Use Plan — for the most desirable utilization of land based on an inventory and classification of natural land types and existing land cover and uses.

Maps are prepared showing topography, whether flat, rolling or mountainous; natural cover, whether wooded, brush lands, grass lands or cultivated; soil types and productivity; the particular uses of all pieces of property in closely developed districts such as the areas around cities and adjacent to highways; and other basic factors picturing land characteristics and uses.

Based on the land use plan, zoning plans can be prepared and enacted in ordinance form for a control of the development of property in ways that will further the general land use plan and that will greatly protect existing development and future investment. (See Plates 3-4-5-6-7.)

3. Streets and Highways Plan -- for efficient, convenient, and safe movement of main traffic streams and lesser important traffic.

This plan consists of a network of arteries for the main traffic and other traffic streams, and streets for the lesser important movements, with locations and widths indicated generally. Such a plan must be laid out for the future and constantly kept ahead of development so that land to be used for known street requirements will be obtained at the least possible cost to the public, and with the least possible detriment to the owners of property.

Streets must be planned **ahead** of property development. It is hardly necessary to illustrate the effect of planning **behind** development. There are numerous examples of fairly new highways rendered obsolete within a few years by a multiplicity of indiscriminate uses cluttering up their frontages.



Plate 5—Highway Business can be Attractive and Arranged for Convenience and Safety.

Plate 6—Without Planning Regulation, such as Zoning, Main Highways Often Develop Like This.



4. Community Design Plan — for the establishment of desirable patterns for subdivision development and regulations governing the subdivision of land.

The general character of the residential areas in Alameda County is determined, largely, by the original subdivision layout and once a subdivision is approved by the County, which, under the law, it must be, there is little that can be done to change its original character.

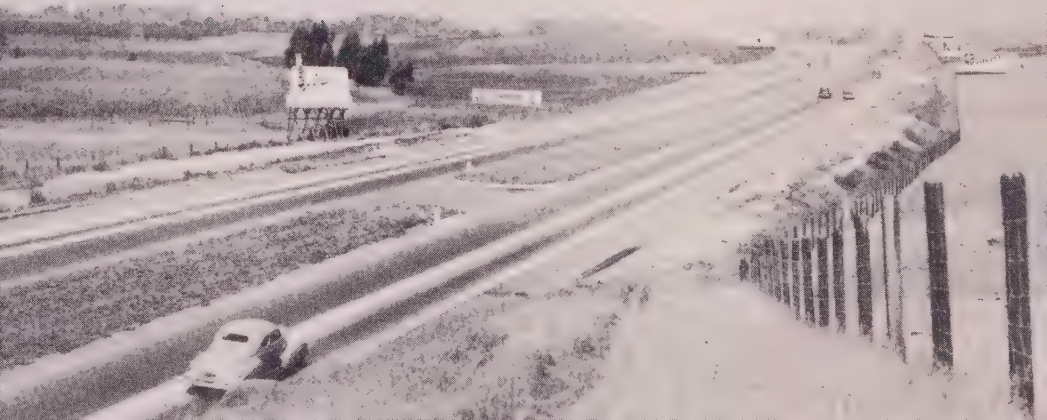
Each subdivision deserves not only a good design but coordination with adjacent properties so that entire areas will not be unrelated and disordered. (See Plates 8-9-10.)

5. Transportation Plan — for the provision of highway, rail, water, and air facilities for shipping goods and produce.

As new areas are developed and population centers extended, careful planning can provide for the most economical and efficient transportation of goods to and from the new industrial and agricultural centers.

6. Transit Plan — for providing facilities for the transportation of masses of people within and about population centers.

Plate 7—What will be the development Along this New Highway?



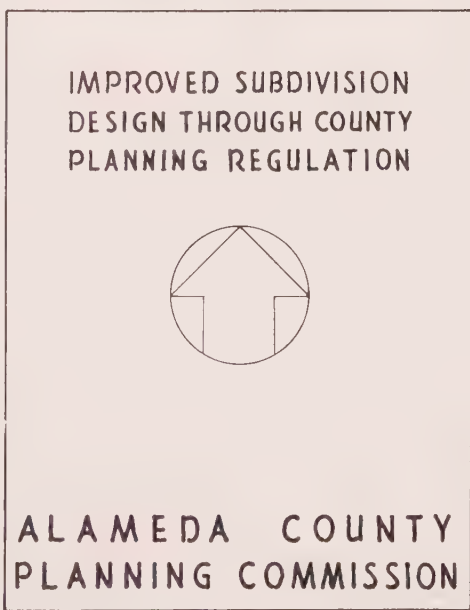
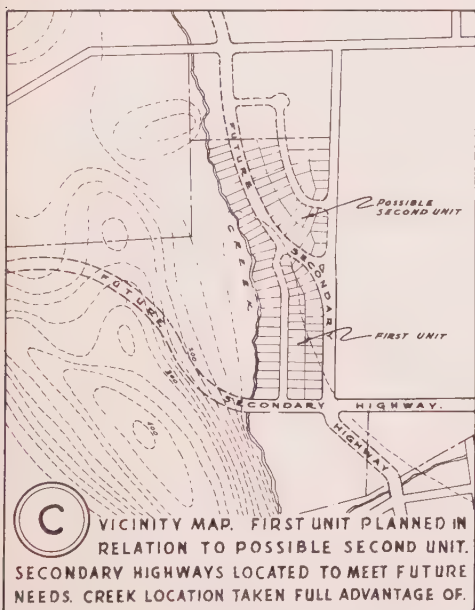
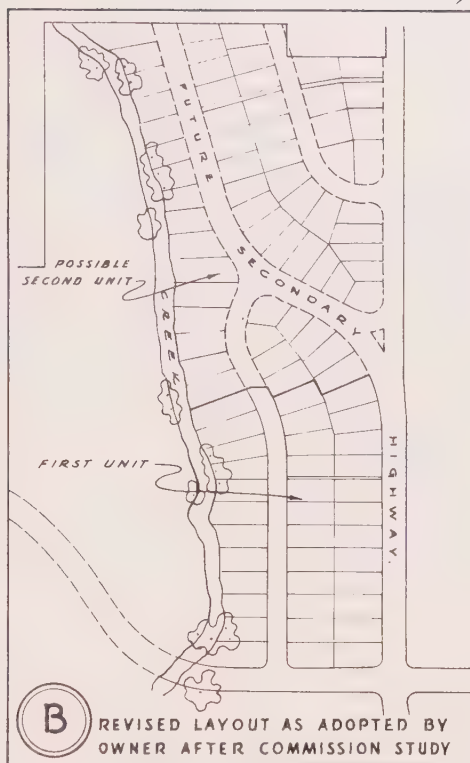
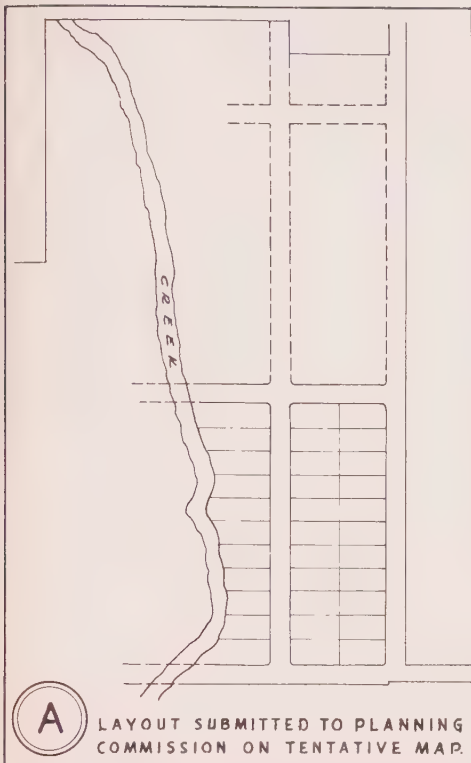


Plate 8—Improved Subdivision Design Through County Planning Regulation.

An important part in the development of some of the unincorporated areas of Alameda County is the planning for coach, trolley or other transit facilities. A carefully planned street layout in growing areas will facilitate the installation of such future transit needs.

7. Recreation Plan — for preserving natural recreation areas throughout the County and local recreation areas in populated districts for ultimate acquisition and development.

A comprehensive recreation plan will show location and size of sites, such as natural reservations or historical monuments, parks, parkways, beaches, school playgrounds, neighborhood play centers, and various adult recreation centers. Through the medium of a recreation plan officially conceived it is quite possible that points of unusual scenic and recreational interest may be opened up for the County's use and for advertising the inherent natural advantages of the County. (See Plates 11-12.)

8. Public Buildings Plan - for the location and arrangement of civic centers and all other public buildings.

Planning must include properly located sites and settings for public buildings, which are usually of a permanent and costly nature. In portions of Alameda County which are rapidly developing the location of schools in relation to future population becomes an important consideration. Planning can be utilized to determine where new schools will be needed and sometimes even to reserve land needed for school purposes in the future. (See Plate 13.)

9. Public Services and Facilities Plan — for providing rights-of-way and other land for essential services including sewerage, drainage, and utility services.

Alameda County, like other counties adjoining populous centers, is now experiencing the necessity for installation of public services in the rapidly growing areas adjacent to such centers. A plan which



*Plate 9—Residential Streets Can be Made Attractive Like This One by
Use of Utility Easements.*

Plate 10—New Residential District with Poles in Street. Compare with Plate 9 above.



shows land and rights-of-way needed can be put into effect in part by the control of subdivisions in which such rights-of-way will be required when approved.

10. Housing Plan — for correcting bad housing conditions and rehousing low income groups in well planned and healthful quarters.

It is usually assumed that housing problems are non-existent in county areas and although Alameda County is in general proof of this assumption there are several glaring examples of existing bad housing. There are also areas where original poor land subdivision and overcrowding of buildings on land have sown the seed that will eventually produce sub-standard living conditions.



Plates 11 and 12—Two Views Along Calaveras Creek where Year-round Flow of Water and Unspoiled Natural Area Provide One of the Many Sites for Possible Scenic and Picnic Facilities in Alameda County.



Plate 13 (above)—Hayward Union High School — An Outstanding Example of the Use of Vision and Intelligent Planning in the location and Arrangement of Public School Facilities.



WHAT HAS BEEN DONE ON THE MASTER PLAN IN ALAMEDA COUNTY

Land Use Plan

The land use portion of the Master Plan is under preparation. This plan will be based on the following studies* which are completed or under way.

- a. Studies that cover the entire county area.
 - Topography
 - Natural cover types
 - Soil types and their productivity
 - Population
 - Major land ownerships
 - Tax delinquencies
- b. Special studies for Eden Township only.
 - Use of property
 - Lot widths and areas
 - Lot ownerships
 - Areas served by sewers and water
 - Soil conditions affecting sewage disposal in areas unserved by sewers.

Based on the land use data a tentative zoning plan has been prepared for a major portion of Eden Township. This plan which is ready for study by the Commission consists of a map showing districts for residential, agricultural, business and industrial purposes and an outline of regulations proposed to be established for these districts.

The total unincorporated county area included in the zoning plan is 54 square miles in which there are some 6500 residential buildings including farm dwellings, and numerous businesses and industries.

*Agencies assisting in collection of land use data: California Forest and Range Experiment Station, U. S. Forest Service; Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture; and U. S. Division of Soils, Division of Soil Technology.

Conditions vary greatly in different portions of this territory. The areas most in need of zoning protection are those areas preponderantly urban in character including the frontages of certain main highways.

Street and Highway Plan

In connection with zoning studies and regulation of subdivisions in Eden Township by the Commission it was found necessary to bear in mind probable future locations and widths of main thoroughfares. Consequently, the staff has started the preparation of a street and highway plan and is carrying it forward to completion along with zoning and subdivision studies.

Community Design Plan

The present County ordinance regulating subdivisions was enacted in 1931 under the authority of the 1929 Map Filing Act. A new ordinance under the authority of the 1937 Subdivision Map Act has been drafted and is now under consideration by the Commission.

The present policy of the Commission and its staff is to give adequate planning study to the design of each subdivision before approval and to persuade subdividers to make revisions where improvements in the original design are possible. The result has been generally beneficial in obtaining well located and adequately wide streets, a good lot layout and proper relationship with adjacent subdivided areas or adjacent areas subject to future subdivision.

Recreation Plan

An outline for recreation plan has been prepared by the staff and after final revision will be presented to the Commission for its consideration.

CONCLUSION

In Alameda County there is, of necessity, a considerable difference in what **is** being done in planning and what **can** be done under state law. This is because the Commission is concentrating on the items it considers most important, and is making thorough studies of these items so that plans, when produced, will be based on facts, not fancy. Proceeding in this fashion only a small outlay of public funds is required from year to year. Another advantage in this careful method of approach is that it is a means of building up cooperation and support of public officials. At the present time official cooperation and support, particularly on the part of members of the Board of Supervisors, the County Surveyor and the Health Officer, are received to a considerable extent.

Commission members and county officials, on the basis of the ground-work in planning that is now being laid and future planning possibilities, believe that sound planning will be an effective means of advertising the County. As plans are prepared and adopted, the growth of undesirable conditions will be checked and sound conditions of development will be promoted for the well being and enjoyment of those people residing and doing business in the County and for the attraction of visitors.



PART II

REPORT TO STATE PLANNING BOARD

Fiscal year 1939-40

A. General Information

1. Name: Alameda County Planning Commission.
2. Fiscal year covered: 1939-40.
3. Address of Commission: Court House, Oakland, California.
4. Location, date and time of regular meetings: County Surveyor's Office, Court House, Oakland, at 3:15 P. M., second Tuesday of each month.
5. Names and addresses of Commission members:

Philip R. Thayer, Chairman 221 Mountain Avenue, Piedmont	Percy Nutt, Vice-Chairman 2060 Allston Way, Berkeley
Burnett Hamilton, Secretary County Surveyor, Court House, Oakland	I. B. Parsons, Bank of Hayward Hayward, California
M. G. Callaghan, Livermore	H. G. Spaulding 1511 Park Street, Alameda
George Janssen, Chairman, Board of Supervisors 5004 Foothill Boulevard, Oakland	Ralph Hoyt, District Attorney Court House, Oakland
6. Names of Consultant and Staff:

I. S. Shattuck, Planning Consultant 1404 Franklin Street, Oakland	Francis J. Violich, Planning Engineer Court House, Oakland
--	---

B. Statistical Data

1. Fiscal items:
 - (a) Expenditures for past year ending June 30th: \$4,449.57.
 - (b) Budget for new year, beginning July 1st: \$6,000.00.
2. Meetings held:
 - (a) Regular: 12.
 - (b) Special: None.
 - (c) Hearings: None.
3. Administrative activities:
 - (a) Subdivisions:

1. Considered: 6.
2. Approved:
 - Tentative maps: 4 (with conditions).
 - Final maps: 3.
3. Disapproved: 0.
- (b) Zoning variances: None.
- (c) Specific road, park, utility, buildings, etc. matters referred by Board to Commission:
 1. Road petitions:
 - 16 acted upon — 10 approved.
 - 6 denied.
 2. Petitions to carry on and conduct business of automojunk dealers:
 - mobile junk dealers.
 - 7 acted upon — 2 approved.
 - 5 denied.
 3. Deeds of land accepted: 1.
- (d) Number of permits issued, by types: None.

C. Progress on the Master Plan

1. Studies now in progress:

The following studies are basis for the LAND USE PLAN are under way:

- Classification of natural land types and soil productivity.
- Population densities and distribution.
- Major land ownerships.
- Tax delinquencies.

Studies are under way for the first unit of the COMMUNITY DESIGN PLAN and for the STREETS AND HIGHWAYS PLAN.

An outline for a Master Recreation Plan has been prepared.

2. Preliminary plans completed:
 - the following maps and studies for the LAND USE PLAN have been completed:
 - Base map of county at 1" equals 1 mile.
 - Natural cover types.
3. Master Plans or sections thereof adopted by Planning Commission: None.
4. Number of amendments: None.
5. Action by legislative body: None.

D. Progress on Official Plans

1. Studies in progress:
Studies for establishment of set-back lines along major highways.
2. Preliminary plans completed and ready for hearings and adoption by Planning Commission:
A new Subdivision Regulation Ordinance.
Zoning Plan for 54 square miles in Eden Township.

E. Program of Proposed Public Works

No projects submitted to the Commission.

F. Reports Issued

Report to the State Planning Board for year 1938-39.

G. General Review of Staff and Commission Activities

See Part I.

H. Outstanding Accomplishments

The effects of subdivision control through adequate planning study by the Commission and its staff before approval have been well located and adequately wide streets, good lot layouts and proper relationship to adjoining areas.

I. Proposed Activities for the Coming Year

- a. Complete basic studies for the Land Use Plan.
- b. Complete and adopt Land Use Plan.
- c. Adopt Zoning Plan in units for portions of Eden Township.
- d. Complete Streets and Highways Plan for Eden Township.
- e. Adopt outline for a Master Recreation Plan for Eden Township and proceed with basic studies specified in the outline.
- f. Adopt subdivision ordinance and add more detailed features to Community Design Plan for Eden Township.

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